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Department of State EXDIS INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 AOS-00 HA-05 RP-10 SR-04 DCT-02 AIO-07
ACOA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /094 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7769
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2287

MEXICO FOR ASST.SEC. BOWDLER

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/29/86 (DION, MARK) OR-M
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, ES
SUBJ: CALL BY AMERICAN FRIENDS ON AMBASSADOR

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. EMBASSY REGRETS DELAY IN TRANSMISSION OF REPORT ON AMBASSADOR'S 2000 MEETING MONDAY (MARCH 24) AT EMBASSY WITH AMERICAN FRIENDS GROUP. THEY HAD NOT CONTACTED EMBASSY UNTIL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ARCHBISHOP ROMERO'S ASSASSINATION WHEN THEY ASKED TO SEE THE AMBASSADOR IMMEDIATELY. IN ENSUING CRISIS OF ARCHBISHOP'S DEATH REPORTING CABLE WAS DELAYED. DCM SPOKE AT LENGTH WITH ARLEN WILSON BY SECURE PHONE ON WEDNESDAY TO PASS ALONG DETAILS OF SESSION.

3. MEMBERS OF FRIENDS COMMITTEE GROUP DESCRIBED TO AMBASSADOR THEIR CONVERSATION WITH REFUGEES WHO HAVE BEEN ARRIVING IN SAN SALVADOR OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS AND MANY OF WHOM HAVE BEEN LODGED AT OFFICES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE.

IN PARTICULAR RECOUNTED STORIES OF ATROCITIES ATTRIBUTED BY REFUGEES TO ORDEN AND MEMBERS OF SECURITY FORCES. HE SUGGESTED THAT ARCHBISHOP ROMERO'S DEATH HAD BEEN WORK OF SECURITY FORCES AND SAID THERE WAS REALLY NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE JRG, THE SECURITY FORCES AND THE "ULTRA-RIGHT." SUPPORTED [redacted] IN THIS ASSESSMENT. OTHER MEMBERS OF GROUP WERE ALSO VEHEMENT ON SCOPE AND INTENSITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS' VIOLATIONS IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE WHICH THEY ALSO ATTRIBUTED TO THE SECURITY FORCES.

4. AMBASSADOR DEFENDED THE DECENCY AND GOOD WILL OF THE JRG, DESCRIBED HIS WIFE'S ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF THE REFUGEES FROM RURAL VIOLENCE AND REJECTED THE ASSERTION THAT JRG, SECURITY FORCES AND ULTRA-RIGHT ARE IDENTICAL ENTITIES. WE DO NOT KNOW, HE SAID, WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ARCHBISHOP'S DEATH AND THE AUTHORS MAY NEVER BE FOUND BUT WE KNOW FROM FIRST-HAND REPORTS OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL THAT ARMY GARRISONS AND POLICE WERE STUNNED BY THE NEWS.
WE KNOW THAT THE REFUGEES UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE HAVE FLED FROM VILLAGES THAT SECURITY FORCES IDENTIFIED AS "PRO-BPR" OR "PRO-FPL" AND WHERE INNOCENT CIVILIANS WERE ATTACKED AND KILLED ALONG WITH LEFT-WING POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND ARMED INSURGENTS. WE DEPLORE THESE EXCESSES ON THE PART OF THESECURITY FORCES AND HAVE URGED THE JRG AND THE HIGH COMMAND TO TAKEEVERY STEP TO DISCIPLINE THE TROOPS.

5. THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE SALVADORAN COUNTRY-SIDE HAS BEEN HIGH FOR OVER SIX MONTHS. THE KILLING BY BOTH THE EXTREME LEFT AND THE EXTREME RIGHT AS WELL AS BY SECURITY FORCES EMPLOYING EXCESSIVE BRUTALITY AGAINST ANYBODY SUSPECTED OF COMPLICITY IN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES, REACHED NEW HIGHS IN THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS. WE HAVE TOLD JRG AND HIGH COMMAND THAT CONTINUED US MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL BE ENDANGERED BY OFFICIAL INSPIRED OR TOLERATED VIOLENCE.
WE ARE CERTAIN THE JRG IS TRYING TO BRING VIOLENCE TO AN END BUT THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY ARE IGNORING THEIR ORDERS. THE REAL PROBLEM OF THE COUNTRY IS NOT THAT THE JRG IS REPRESSIVE BUT THAT IT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO RESTORE ORDER AMIDST INCREDIBLE VIOLENCE FROM BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT.

6. FRIENDS GROUP MADE CLEAR IN SUBSEQUENT REMARKS THAT THEY WERE SPEAKING EXCLUSIVELY OF RIGHT WING VIOLENCE, OR OPPRESSION, IN WHICH THEY IMPLICATED MILITARY, ULTRA RIGHT AND JUNTA BUT THAT VIOLENCE FROM THE ULTRA LEFT WAS SIMPLY INVISIBLE TO THEM.

7. AT THIS POINT WE DESCRIBED CLOSE LIAISON BETWEEN EMBASSY AND PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS IMPLEMENTING THE LAND REFORM. THEY INFORM US THAT MUCH RURAL VIOLENCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH FAR LEFT EFFORTS TO TERRORIZE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE REPS AND ELECTED MEMBERS OF NEWLY FORMED PEASANT COOPERATIVES WHO ARE TAKING OVER THE GREAT ESTATES. SGA WHILE WE ARE AWARE THAT FAR RIGHT AND SOME ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY FORCES ARE TAKING PART IN BRUTAL KILLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, WE ARE ALSO AWARE THAT THE FAR LEFT IS CARRYING ON ITS OWN CAMPAIGN OF MURDER AND INTIMIDATION AND THAT IT IS AIMED INCREASINGLY AT THE OFFICIALS AND ELECTED MANAGERS OF THE NEW COOPERATIVE FARMS. THIS SHOULD BE DENOUNCED TOO AS A DESPERATE EFFORT TO STOP SOCIAL CHANGE IN EL SALVADOR THAT WILL STRIKE HARD AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF MARXIST EXTREMISM. THESE COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED WITH COLD DISBELIEF.

WHITE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [redacted] DATE 8 JUL 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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